## Sustainable INL News

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs

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## **Xeriscaping: what it is and is not.**

eriscape landscaping, by definition, is landscaping designed specifically for areas that are susceptible to drought, or for properties where water conservation is practiced. Derived from the Greek *xeros* meaning "dry," the term, xeriscape means literally "dry landscape."

Note that "xeriscape" is pronounced as if it began with the letter, Z. This sometimes leads to the misspelling, "zeroscape." But xeriscape landscaping techniques needn't result in a "big zero" for landscape design aesthetics. In fact, as most people employ the term, xeriscape landscaping needn't be limited to desert plants, such as cacti. Rather, a xeriscape landscaping policy allows you to use the plants you want, but insists on commonsense measures that will help conserve water, such as grouping plants with similar water requirements together. INL is located in a high desert area, which means that xeriscaping must include plants that are drought tolerant in addition to being able to withstand cold, arctic-

"The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired in value."

- Theodore Roosevelt, 1910

Nonetheless, a common element in xeriscape landscaping is the reduction of lawn grass areas, since lawn grass is often one of the worst offenders against water conservation. Another widespread tactic in xeriscape landscaping is the deployment of indigenous plants, since they are adapted to the local climate and consequently require less water. Plants most suited to xeriscape landscaping are sometimes referred to as "xeric" plants.1

like winter conditions.

Xeriscaping is important to INL as we are subject to Federal goals to reduce our water usage 16% by FY 2015 as compared to FY 2007.

Xeriscaping can help us meet this goal, but cannot simply be turning off the water and letting the grass die or covering it with asphalt. Rather, it is a thoughtful consideration of pleasing combinations of landscaping strategies that minimize irrigation water use. The use of a

variety of landscaping materials to present a pleasing appearance often results in decreased maintenance needs along with decreased water use. This photograph provides an excellent example of xeriscaping.



## Sustainable INL Program

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We're on the Web! www.inl.gov/sustainable

1: taken from www.about.com



